Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 29, 2015

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert Humphrey Building, Room 416 G
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Burwell:

As medical providers and elected representatives, the GOP Doctors Caucus would like to share our serious concerns with the recently proposed U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) breast cancer screening recommendations.

We disagree with the Affordable Care Act's policy of tying preventative service coverage requirements to USPSTF recommendations. But because it is the law, the "C" grade the USPSTF assigned to screening mammograms for women between the ages of 40 and 49 will limit access to this valuable diagnostic tool for 17 million women. These draft recommendations are not only inconsistent with current clinical practice, but could also result in thousands of additional breast cancer deaths if followed.

We believe that patients and the medical providers with whom they have an established relationship—who themselves follow clinical guidelines developed by their specialty societies—should decide which diagnostic tools are most appropriate in a given case. We would also remind the USPSTF and other stakeholders to keep in mind that patients are not study subjects, but human beings. For a woman stricken with breast cancer, the incidence of disease is 100 percent. Should the USPSTF recommendations become finalized, they will have a chilling effect on coverage for diagnostic mammograms, jeopardizing the health of American women.

We urge you do everything in your power to ensure that these draft recommendations are not finalized so that women are not confused about the role of screening, and so that access is preserved to the best screening tools available when a patient and her medical providers decide a mammogram is necessary.

Sincerely,

Brad R. Wenstrup

Diane Black

Thomas Rice

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Jim Heck

Renee L. Ellmers

Larry Bucshon

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Brian Babin

Don Bacon